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OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHPU #1265 1941638
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 131638Z JUL 06
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3494
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1110
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 0955
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS PORT AU PRINCE 001265

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: "REPORTS OF MY DEATH ARE GREATLY
EXAGGERATED"...PREVAL LAUGHS OFF RUMORS OF FATAL HEART
ATTACK

¶1. (U) This message is sensitive but unclassified; please
protect accordingly.

¶2. (SBU) Haiti's infamous gossip network went into overdrive
Tuesday and Wednesday as reports circulated widely that
President Preval had died of a heart attack July 11 while
working at the Presidential Palace. Preval, who was alive and
kicking at the Haitian Diaspora Forum Event July 12, laughed
off reports, telling Ambassador that if he died, she would be
the first to know. He joked, "voodoo brought me back! I am
not dead yet." Preval staffers, including advisor Bob
Manuel, report that they got tens of panicked phone calls
from all over the country and abroad over the past two days
asking about the president's health; we understand many of
the more outlandish rumors, such as the report that the
government had fled the country, popped up on the internet.
As Preval worked the room at the Forum last night, he looked
fit and energetic, although Manuel acknowledged he was tired
from his European travels.

¶2. (SBU) Levity aside, the fact that a rumor of this type
could get such traction in Port au Prince is worrisome and
points to continuing concern about Preval's health. Despite
his inner circle's insistence that the President is well,
Haiti's precarious security situation and the government's
hands off communications policy make more rumors of this type
inevitable.
SANDERSON